REMARKS

There remains pending in this application Claims 1-11, of which Claim 1 is the sole independent claim. No claims have been cancelled or added.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above application is respectfully sought.

Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claim 1 is directed to a sheet folding apparatus for folding a sheet by nipping and conveying the sheet with a pair of folding rollers. The invention is characterized in that at least one of the pair of folding rollers has a single large diameter portion and small diameter portions at both sides of the large diameter portion. In addition, the large diameter portion is provided within a convey range in a sheet width direction of a minimum size foldable sheet in the sheet folding apparatus.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Branecky, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,180,151). In view of the above amendments and for reasons which follow, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention as now set forth in independent Claim 1 is directed to a sheet folding apparatus for folding a sheet by nipping and conveying the sheet with a pair of folding rollers. In the apparatus, at least one of the pair of folding rollers has a single large diameter portion and small diameter portions at both sides of the large diameter portion, the large diameter portion being provided within a convey range in a sheet width direction of a minimum size sheet foldable in a sheet folding apparatus. As a result of this combination of features and particular configuration, relief for the pressure applied in folding the sheet can be ensured and thus creases may be avoided.

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Branecky, et al. is directed to a buckle chute folder for folding one or more sheets of paper. The folder includes a buckle chute and a pair of folding rollers situated downstream of the buckle chute and each of the folding rollers has a plurality of circumferential grooves extending perpendicular to the axis of the roller, with the grooves of one roller being offset with respect to the grooves of the other roller. In Branecky, et al., grooves 24 of the front roller 18 are provided so as to be offset with respect to the grooves 26 of folding roller 20, whereby thin collations as well as thick collations can be folded with high quality. However, with such a system there is an obvious tendency of the folded sheets to be rippled along the grooves which are mutually offset and opposite to one another. Moreover, the pressure in the folding paper cannot be relieved by means of spaces closed by the grooves mutually offset and opposite whereby the crease is generated. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in Claim 1 as now amended is distinguishable over the applied art.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 as amended is patentable over the applied art of record.

The remaining claims in the above application either depend either directly or indirectly from Claim 1 and are therefore patentable over the art of record for reasons noted above with respect to Claim 1. In addition, each recite features of the invention still further distinguishing it from the applied art. Favorable and independent consideration thereof is respectfully sought.

Applicants respectfully submit that all outstanding matters in the above application have been addressed and that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the above application are respectfully sought.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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